



WORDS MATTER.

WHY I DON'T USE THE WORD "SLAVE":

"Slave" implies a passiveness that is wholly false; no person exists as property. It took consistent violence to *enslave* someone. Using "enslaved person", "enslaver", and "enslavement" force us to recognize the violence and cruelty required to uphold such an institution, while also recognizing the humanity of the enslaved person. It separates a person's identity from their circumstance.

SLAVE ≡ **NOUN**

VS.

ENSLAVED PERSON

↓ ↓
ADJECTIVE NOUN

"THOMAS
JEFFERSON HAD
600 SLAVES."

VS.

"THOMAS JEFFERSON
ENSLAVED 600
PEOPLE."

Who Deserves Credit for Freeing the Enslaved?

1. After you read your assigned document, with a partner, identify the evidence it uses to back-up its claim and write it on this worksheet.
2. Next, decide who will present which pieces of evidence to the opposing team.
3. While the other team presents their evidence, write down what they say.
4. Once they are finished, summarize what they have said so you can double-check you understand their evidence.
5. When you present, the opposing team will also summarize what you've told them as well. If they miss any evidence or do not correctly understand it, be sure to correct them.
6. Once both teams have presented, each person should complete the What do you think? section
7. Then, as a group, discuss your opinions and complete the Consensus activity

→ African-Americans Deserve Credit for Freeing Themselves

This document's main claim is that African-Americans deserve credit for freeing themselves. The evidence they use is:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

→ Abraham Lincoln Deserves Credit for Freeing the Enslaved

This document's main claim is that Abraham Lincoln deserves credit for freeing the enslaved. The evidence they use is:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you think?

Personally, I believe that _____

Consensus!

Starting now, you may abandon your assigned position and argue for either side. Your group should come to some kind of an agreement, or consensus, about the issue. You can still disagree about some things.

Our group agreed that _____

Some remaining disagreements we have are _____

Gathering Evidence!

Who Deserves Credit for Freeing People Who Were Enslaved?

1. After you read your assigned document, with a partner, identify the evidence it uses to back-up its claim and write it in the correct column.
2. Next, decide who will present which pieces of evidence to the opposing team.
3. While the other team presents their evidence, write down what they say in the correct column.
4. Once they are finished, summarize what they have said so you can double-check you understand their evidence.
5. When you present, the opposing team will also summarize what you've told them as well. If they miss any evidence or do not correctly understand it, be sure to correct them.
6. Once both teams have presented, as a group, discuss your opinions and write a summary of your group's consensus.
7. Complete the Self-Evaluation and 'What do you think?' sections on the back.

Abraham Lincoln Deserves Credit for Freeing People Who Were Enslaved	Enslaved People Deserve Credit for Freeing Themselves
Group's Consensus (or disagreements):	

Who Deserves Credit for Freeing the Enslaved?

→ Enslaved People Deserve Credit for Freeing Themselves

The traditional answer to the question *who freed the enslaved* is: Abraham Lincoln. In recent years, though, this answer has been challenged as another example of focusing only on the actions of “great white males” and ignoring the actions of everyone else. The image of him as the Great Emancipator is a myth created by whites to deprive blacks of credit for achieving their own freedom. In reality, the enslaved freed themselves.

Deprive: to take away.
Exempted: not required to do something that others are required to do.

The Emancipation Proclamation, signed by Lincoln, is often credited with ending slavery, however it is often overlooked that the Proclamation exempted much of the country.

*...all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, **the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States**, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free... the people...in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit: Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts, are for the present, **left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.***
– Emancipation Proclamation, 1863.

Lincoln’s proclamation freed not a single slave. It applied only to the enslaved people in territories then beyond the reach of federal authority. It specifically exempted Tennessee and portions of Louisiana and Virginia, and it left slavery in the loyal border states -- Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri. By exempting one-third of the South from the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln was more determined to retain the goodwill of the slaveowners who were loyal to him than to secure the liberty of the slaves. In fact, Lincoln himself even said so—he once wrote in a letter, “if I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it.” He was only concerned with saving the white Union at all costs, even at the cost of continued black slavery.

Federal: government.
Retain: keep.
Tactic: strategy.

Despite Lincoln, though, no human-being alive could have held back the tide that swept toward freedom. The white myth that Lincoln freed the slaves denied African-Americans credit for this great revolution; it was a tactic

used among whites to convince blacks that white America, (personified by Abraham Lincoln), had *given* them their freedom, and therefore blacks were indebted to them.

Personified: the perfect example.

Yet, in reality, enslaved people took their own freedom by refusing to work for their Confederate owners, escaping into Union lines, and enlisting in the Union army to fight against the Confederates. Some historians argue that without the support of African-Americans, the Union would not have won the war. In all, around 180,000 escaped and freed enslaved people fought in the war.

Escaped slaves who joined the Union forced soldiers to recognize their importance to the Union's success. When the war started, the Union, and Lincoln, were not planning on ending slavery—they only wanted to stop the spread of slavery into the new Western states. However, the determination, courage, and abilities of the African-Americans who fought with the Union converted many white Americans to the view that the security of the Union depended upon the destruction of slavery. Eventually, it tipped the balance in favor of freedom.

Enslaved and freed African-Americans also played a crucial role in the war from behind Southern (Confederate) lines--engaging in sabotage, strikes, individual acts of violence, conspiracy, rebellion and marronage (forming illegal communities.) These slave disturbances drained Confederate resources, with militia and army units forced to patrol at home rather than fight the Union Army.

Finally, the Civil War would not have even happened, and slavery would have never ended had it not been for the courageous resistance movements led by enslaved and formally enslaved people. People like Nat Turner, Harriett Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and thousands more put their lives at risk every day in order to end slavery. Without them, white Americans might have never even questioned the evil cruelty of enslaving humans, and the issue would have never even been discussed. Clearly, enslaved people were neither passive victims nor pawns of powerful white males. No one was more responsible for smashing the shackles of slavery than the slaves themselves.

Passive: someone who allows things to happen or who accepts what other people do or decide without trying to change anything.
Pawn: a person or group that does not have much power and that is controlled by a more powerful person or group.

Who Deserves Credit for Freeing the Enslaved?

→ Abraham Lincoln Deserves Credit for Freeing People Who Were Enslaved

When the Civil War began in 1861, the debate was never about freeing all the enslaved people—instead, it was about *preventing* slavery in any new states. Although there were abolitionists who promoted the idea of freeing all enslaved people and ending slavery for good, no one in the government really supported this idea. Therefore, it was surprising that, in 1862, Abraham Lincoln proposed the idea to his staff. Despite being told it was a bad idea, Lincoln bravely issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1st, 1863 which ended slavery in the United States. Because of this, Abraham Lincoln earned the nickname "The Great Emancipator".

Emancipation: freedom
Proclamation: announcement

Emancipation Proclamation, 1863, Abraham Lincoln:

*"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three (1863), **all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free**; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.*

Critics of Lincoln say that the Emancipation Proclamation actually only freed enslaved people who lived in territories that were not loyal to the Union (those loyal to the Confederacy). Although this is true, the Emancipation Proclamation immediately changed the legal status of all slaves in the Confederate territories, and as soon as the Union Army arrived, it liberated the slaves in that area. On the first day, it affected tens of thousands of slaves. It also encouraged enslaved people in Confederate territories to escape and after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, it inspired a dramatic increase in the number of escape attempts.

In addition, Lincoln didn't actually have the power to fully end slavery. Slavery existed because of state laws and the President does not have the power to declare state laws invalid. Although the Supreme Court could declare a law unconstitutional, there was nothing in the Constitution at that time that made slavery unconstitutional. However, as Commander in Chief, the President has great power when it comes to wars. Therefore, Lincoln claimed that slavery was enabling the Confederates to carry out their war, and thus it was necessary to end slavery in order to suppress rebellion and save the country. Yet, if Lincoln was going to argue that ending slavery was a military necessity, he had to exclude areas not in rebellion (the Union territories). That being said, the Proclamation still officially applied to 3.5 million out of the 4 million enslaved people.

Invalid: not true, not legal.

Commander in Chief: a person who is in charge of the military of an entire country.

Enabling: to make possible, to help.

Suppress: to stop.

President Lincoln still had concerns that the Emancipation Proclamation might be reversed or found invalid by the court after the war. He saw a constitutional amendment as a more permanent solution. After winning reelection in the election of 1864, Lincoln made the passage of a constitutional amendment prohibiting slavery his top legislative priority. Lincoln urged Congress to pass an amendment in his December 6, 1864 State of the Union Address:

Legislative: law-making.

"There is only a question of time as to when the proposed amendment will go to the States for their action. And as it is to so go, at all events, may we not agree that the sooner the better?"

Lincoln tried to convince legislators to vote for the amendment through any means necessary. He instructed his aides to bribe representatives and senators and promised them top government positions. His hard work paid off! The 13th amendment finally passed in 1865 by a vote of 119 to 56, narrowly reaching the required two-thirds majority.

Bribe: giving someone money or a present in order to get someone to do something.

Thirteenth Amendment, 1865:

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

The impact of the abolition of slavery was felt quickly and hundreds of thousands of enslaved people were freed. In addition to abolishing slavery and prohibiting involuntary servitude, (except as a punishment for crime), the Thirteenth Amendment also invalidated the Fugitive Slave Clause and the Three-Fifths Compromise.

Lincoln, talking about himself, 1865:

"...all would bear him witness that he (I) had never shrunk from doing all that he (I) could to eradicate slavery by issuing an emancipation proclamation. But this amendment is a King's cure for all the evils [of slavery]."

Bear him witness: remember.